

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

VOLUME XXIII.

ASHLAND, O., THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1901.

No. 20

Editorial

Do We Yearn for Immortality?

The well known argument of a universal *yearning* for immortality being itself *proof* of immortality is questioned in some quarters. The premise is denied, and to ascertain if possible where the truth lies in this controversy, the Society of Psychical Research has issued a circular asking those to whom the circular comes whether they have a desire to be immortal. It is what you might call a "close question," and calculated to set a man thinking rather profoundly about himself in a very strange and vital relation. Do I really wish to live forever? The question suggests another. Will the future life be more desirable, more satisfying than this? If not, the yea and the nay may stand on a pretty even footing, for one experience of such manner and matter of life as we suffer here would seem to be about as much as most people would care to undertake. There are, however, many, in fact, who would prefer an eternity of this earthly life to total annihilation. Proof of this we have in the general unwillingness of men and women to die. Tho they have plodded and struggled along thru threescore years of trouble and sorrow, nevertheless when the end approaches there is a looking back with regret, a yearning for a continuance of this poor poverty of life, with abundant weariness, such as is the lot of most of us in this "vale of tears."

Now if we add to this natural and manifest yearning for continuance in life the assured persuasion that a fuller, more satisfying life awaits us beyond the grave, that that life rises and broadens into a splended immortality, that it shall not be darkened with sorrow of any kind, or encumbered with any sort of physical burden, or walled in by any sort of limitations, why should we not logically recognize a passionate yearning for it spreading out thru all that inner consciousness which has in any measure been enlightened with the glorious hope which revelation has brought to us? We know that there is a general, a universal, a passionate yearning for the lesser life. Why should there not be a yearning for the greater? It is inconceivable that a sane man should reply to the aforesaid circular, and say: No, I do not desire immortality. I want death to end all. There are men who will say this, but they are not normal. They are spiritually insane. A man of healthy mind, bearing normal relations to life, running so much in harmony with nature as to find a rational enjoyment in life, will reply that he cannot even endure the thought of annihilation. He wants to live on, and when in the maturity of his powers he contemplates that inevitable limit which nature has put upon this earthly life, he will find himself yearning that in

some way the Infinite Love which has evolved, he knows not how, his consciousness and his intelligence out of the darkness of the mysterious past, into the glad light of the present, has yet in store for him a "more abundant life," a more resplendent light, illuminating endless ages in whose economy there shall be no setting sun.

How utterly futile does a man become who denies the thought and hope of immortality. All the significance there is in human life aside from a race of superior animals is utterly blighted by the denial of a future life. It is even a question whether without the uplift of this hope man would today be very much superior to some animals, excepting in ferocity and wickedness. To blot out the idea of immortality would be like walling in the skies, and announcing that there is nothing beyond that wall to which a good long ladder might not enable us to climb. We gaze upon that blank, black wall, unconscious of the stars and the glories and the splendors stretching and flashing infinitely beyond it, and we say, That is the end and the all. Whatever of inspiration and hope there was in life goes utterly out of it, for we have speedily tasted and proved all that can be found on the hither side of that wall. Folly and madness attend the soul which does not believe in immortality and yearn for it. Why should we seek to seal the doors of our narrow prison house, even tho there should be but a peradventure of light and liberty outside?

As Thy Day, So Thy Strength

Any philosophy of life which brings release from the burdens of care or the billows of sorrow will find its application in this world to a need which is as wide and as deep as human experience. But where will we find such a philosophy aside from the loving kindness of the Lord, and from the "very present help in time of trouble" which the tender heart and gentle hand of Infinite mercy ministers to the fainting children of sorrow? As thy day, so shall thy strength be. Need we worry any more, or sum up in our imagination the intolerable evils of our lot, or shrink from the toil and peril of our earthly journey? Attend carefully to the narrow limit of time this special providence contemplates. As thy day. Not yesterday, for that is numbered with the past and can never again trouble us. Not tomorrow, for that has not arrived. But today; and behold, if we have learned how to trust in the Lord, how to stay our minds upon him, no burden will come that we will not have strength to support, no sorrow that we may not be comforted therein, no peril but that we shall find ready deliverance, no temptation without the way of escape. "Take no thought for the morrow," said Jesus. "Sufficient unto the day is the